Later, during our tour in Latin America, lecturing on the factors of economic growth, I referred time and again to this miracle. "Persons who have not visited Japan," I said, "can hardly imagine the destruction that country suffered from bombing. Practically all its industry, all the wealth accumulated in four score years of strenuous labor and thrift, was reduced to heaps of ashes and rubble. All that was left to Japan was her people, with their hands and brains, skills, patience, and discipline. They started to rebuild their country with their bare hands. A decade later Japan had a bigger and better industrial plant than she had before the war, a better developed network of railroads, better bridges and harbors, power stations with greater capacity."

And I contrasted this observation with a different imaginary situation.

"This miracle of postwar recovery makes one think of the possible aftermath of another war, a war fought with a new weapon—a hypothetical death ray that passes through the thickest stone and cement walls and steel plates as the sun's rays pass through windowpanes without affecting plants or lower animals. But it does weaken human brains and make people forget everything they have learned since childhood—reading and writing, professional and occupational skills, ability to work together. A country defeated in such a war would keep all its industrial plant, its means of transportation, department stores and banks, but it would not know what to do with these riches. Such a country would sink to abysmal poverty in a shorter time than it took Japan to rebuild her economy."

The conclusion was obvious. The decisive factor in a country's economic progress is its people rather than its natural resources or the accumulated capital and technology built up through the efforts of the preceding generations or imported from outside. Many examples from history support this generalization, but the resurrection of Japan is the most eloquent among them.

The scenery of Japan—especially the Japanese countryside—is in striking contrast to that of the United States—no open horizons, no feeling of endless expanses, everything carefully measured, each square inch of good soil put to work with amazing skill and patience. Yet almost all Americans who spend some time in Japan fall under its spell. Perhaps the goodwill toward Japan among the Americans living there is even stronger than the goodwill of the Japanese toward America.

American troops were still on Japanese soil when we were there. They were there to shield Japan from aggression and, at the same time, guard the outer line of our national defenses, but their presence was creating some awkward situations. The local Communists blew up any trivial incident into a national issue, playing on nationalist feelings in concert with the extreme chauvinists—the old game they